
MANAGEMENT BRIEF provides VA senior management
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important HSR&D finding or publication.

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Studies examine racial differences in surgical outcomes

Two recently published articles about HSR&D studies examine racial differences in surgical outcomes. The first study, funded through the Ischemic Heart Disease Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (IHD QUERI), sought to determine whether there are racial differences with respect to short and long-term outcomes for all veterans undergoing coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) in VA medical centers. Previous studies suggest that both short and long-term outcomes may be worse for African-Americans who underwent this procedure. However, after examining data on nearly 30,000 African-American and white veterans who had CABG surgery from 1994 through 1999, researchers in this QUERI study found that both groups had comparable operative mortality and equivalent rehospitalization rates. African-Americans did have a slightly worse long-term survival rate - 9 percent lower than whites.¹ The second study, funded by the Office of Quality Management, Patient Care Services, and HSR&D, examined clinical data on more than 13,000 vascular operations performed at 123 VA hospitals. Specifically, researchers looked at risk factors for 30-day mortality following three types of vascular surgery performed between 1991 and 1995, and whether race is an important risk factor. Researchers identified several medical conditions that appear to be risk factors for surgery (eg, preoperative rest pain, history of hypertension or transient ischemic attack), but race did not appear to play a significant role.²

1) Maynard C and Ritchie JL. Racial differences in outcomes of veterans undergoing coronary artery bypass grafting. *Am J Cardiol* 2001, Oct 15; 88(8): 893-5 A8.

2) Collins TC, Johnson M, Daley, J, Henderson WG, Khuri SF, Gordon HS. Perioperative risk factors for 30-day mortality after elective surgery for vascular disease in VA hospitals: Is race important? *J Vasc Surg* 2001, Oct; 34(4):634-40.

For more information regarding IHD QUERI, visit their web site on the Internet at <http://www.hsr.d.seattle.med.va.gov/ihdqueri/>, or on the VA Intranet at <http://vaww.hsr.d.seattle.med.va.gov/ihdqueri/>.

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